UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/8
6 January 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

# IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 2 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of note verbale No. WK 1/6/583-0 dated 16 December 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Iranian Embassy in Abu Dhabi protesting against the Iranian Government's announcement of a soccer tournament to be held on Abu Musa island. I also transmit to you copies of notes verbales addressed to the Iranian Government on earlier occasions protesting against the measures it was taking on the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates and occupied by Iran. The notes in question are those of 29 August 1992 (3/1/259-7), 12 March 1996 (WK 1/6/95-0), 22 April 1996 (WK 1/6/186-0), 18 July 1996 (1/1/923-1) and 22 September 1996 (WK 1/6/432-0).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Khalid Khalifa AL-MUALLA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

97-00322 (E) 080197 090197 100197

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Annex

1. Note verbale dated 16 December 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi. The United Arab Emirates has the honour to convey to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the Government's announcement of a soccer tournament to be held on Abu Musa, an island belonging to the United Arab Emirates, as disseminated by the Iranian news agency on 14 December 1996 through Mr. Hasan Rada'i, is in flagrant violation of the memorandum of understanding concerning Abu Musa concluded in 1971, imposes an unlawful state of affairs and constitutes an attempt to perpetuate the occupation of the island and bring it under Iranian sovereignty by use of force.

Accordingly, the Government of the United Arab Emirates strongly protests against this unlawful action. It and all similar measures previously taken by the Iranian Government on Abu Musa are to be regarded as unwarranted acts of provocation that do not confer any legal rights on the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the island.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its sovereignty over Abu Musa. It does not recognize any other sovereignty over the island, and it reserves all of its rights with regard thereto.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

2. Note verbale dated 29 August 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and, with reference to the note verbale dated 25 August 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Tehran (1832/312), has the honour to state that the United Arab Emirates is at all times desirous of furthering the existing bilateral relations of the two countries and to convey to the Embassy the following:

The positive statements made by Iranian officials on numerous occasions conveying a serious wish to further relations of friendship and cooperation between the two Muslim neighbours are welcomed by the authorities of the United Arab Emirates inasmuch as they accord with their genuine desire for the further expansion of such relations. It has nevertheless been noted in recent times that there is a manifest contradiction between the statements made by Iranian

officials and what happens in reality. Some examples of this are given hereunder.

1. During the holy month of Ramadan the Iranian authorities tried to implement measures that conflict with the laws of the United Arab Emirates as they affect persons working on Abu Musa, an island that belongs to the United Arab Emirates. In short, they were given the choice of accepting Iranian identity cards or leaving the island. As employees of the United Arab Emirates, however, these workers were unable under any circumstances to accept measures such as these. The Iranian authorities therefore deported them from the island and refused to allow them to return.

2. At the end of the 1991/92 school year Iranian officials also requested teachers to remove their belongings from the island with a view to withholding permission for them to return unless they complied with the Iranian measures concerning the acceptance of Iranian identity cards. The matter was discussed at the time with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Arab Emirates and an understanding was reached that the teachers would leave their belongings on the island so that they could return there and resume their regular work. Recently, we were abruptly confronted with the refusal of the Iranian officials to allow the teachers to return to the island, in violation of the assurances given by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates that the teachers would have the right to return to the island and practise their profession there.

3. The Embassy's reference to the privileged treatment accorded to nationals of the United Arab Emirates by the Iranian authorities on Abu Musa, an island that belongs to the United Arab Emirates, is a matter for surprise and indeed astonishment given that the people concerned are nationals of the United Arab Emirates, have been living on their land for hundreds of years and deal with their Government in the United Arab Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates therefore requests the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the sake of relations of good-neighbourliness, to restore the situation that previously prevailed on the island.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

3. Note verbale dated 12 March 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi and has the honour to alert the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the fact that its construction of an airfield on Abu Musa (an island belonging to the United Arab Emirates), opened on 10 March 1996 by His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Torkan, Minister of Roads and Transport, is in flagrant violation

of the memorandum of understanding concerning Abu Musa that was concluded by the two countries in 1971. This action constitutes unilateral imposition of an unlawful state of affairs in an attempt to extend Iranian sovereignty, perpetuate the forcible occupation of the island and undermine security and stability in the region.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates strongly protests against these unlawful measures, and it regards the construction and inauguration of a civilian airfield on Abu Musa as an unwarranted act of provocation that does not confer any legal rights in the island on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates reserves all of its rights with regard to the island of Abu Musa.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

4. Note verbale dated 22 April 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and has the honour to inform it that the Iranian Government's announcement of 15 March 1996 concerning the construction of an electricity station on the Greater Tunb, an island belonging to the United Arab Emirates that has been occupied by Iran since 1971, is in breach of the norms of international law, is a violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the island and does not confer any rights on the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the island. This is in accordance with those established norms of international law that concern the impermissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and those stipulating that occupation does not confer on the occupying Power any rights to the territory forcibly subjugated by it.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates considers that the persistence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in taking measures to perpetuate its occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, for the purpose of imposing a fait accompli by use of force, can only further complicate the existing dispute.

The United Arab Emirates affirms its commitment to pursuing all peaceful means, including recourse to the International Court of Justice, with a view to resolving the ongoing dispute with the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the three islands.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to its counterpart the assurances of its highest consideration.

5. Note verbale dated 18 July 1996 from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Tehran addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the note verbale of 7 July 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates (WK 1/6/339-0). It refers to note No. 566 of 16 May 1996 and note No. 932 of 1 July 1996 from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi and affirms its respect for the relations of good-neighbourliness that exist between the two countries. The Embassy has the honour to inform the Ministry that the Government of the United Arab Emirates rejects the allegations made in note No. 566 of 16 May 1996 and once more affirms its sovereignty over the island of Abu Musa. The Government of the United Arab Emirates further rejects the allegations made in note No. 932 of 1 July 1996 and affirms that the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb islands are an integral part of the territory of the United Arab Emirates, that the Iranian authorities on the islands are to be regarded as occupying authorities and that any action that they take there is to be governed by the relevant rules of international law.

The Embassy takes this opportunity to convey to the Ministry the assurances of its highest consideration.

6. Note verbale dated 22 September 1996 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and has the honour to inform the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the opening of a cold-storage plant and fish-processing factory on Abu Musa, an island belonging to the United Arab Emirates, in the presence of the Iranian Minister of Reconstruction, as reported by the Iranian news agency on 31 August 1996, constitutes a flagrant violation of the memorandum of understanding concerning Abu Musa concluded in 1971 and is to be regarded as the imposition of an unlawful state of affairs and an attempt to perpetuate the occupation of the island and to bring it under Iranian sovereignty by use of force.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates informs the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that it strongly protests against this unlawful action. It and all the similar measures the Iranian Government has taken on Abu Musa are to be regarded as unwarranted acts of provocation that do not confer any legal rights on the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the island.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its sovereignty over Abu Musa. It will not recognize any other sovereignty over the island, and it reserves all of its rights with regard thereto.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

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